

Prisoners' Fate in Balance

Cuba 'on War Footing'

Among Cubans themselves, reaction to President Kennedy's announcement of a quarantine centered on three aspects:

- In Havana, Premier Fidel Castro's government announced that the country's combat units "were placed on a war footing." The communist Premier was scheduled to give his official reply to Mr. Kennedy today in a TV and radio speech.

- Enthusiastic Cuban refugee leaders in Miami, Fla., predicted early liberation of their communist-held island. Cuban ex-President Carlos Prío Socarras hailed the President's announcement as "the beginning of a battle that

must end with the total liberation of Cuba."

- A more somber note was sounded in New York where it was said that the fate of the 1113 Bay of Pigs prisoners almost certainly hinges on the result of the Russian-American showdown created by the quarantine. James D. Donovan, New York lawyer and Democratic candidate for U. S. Senate who has been negotiating for the prisoners' release, refused to suggest what the effect would be on the proposed ransom, said he needed time to study the President's move and consult with the Cuban Families Committee.

The Havana communique said "hundreds of thousand

of men were mobilized in only a few hours. Squads of the United Party and all organizations of the masses are mobilizing with impressive patriotic fervor . . . the nation is awake and on a war footing ready to repel any attack."

"Each weapon is in its place and beside each weapon are the heroic defenders of the revolution and country."

Havana appeared normal after President Kennedy's speech last night altho there was a slight increase in guards at banks and department stores.